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23 March 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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Indonesia: Army leaders and their civilian colleagues are proceeding circuitously toward the formation of the next government.

Discussions on cabinet composition are under way among General Suharto, the Sultan of Jogjakarta --who heads the interim cabinet presidium--and Foreign Minister Adam Malik. These three apparently will head the new government. Since the present interim cabinet is reasonably satisfactory, however, the talks are said to be "proceeding without haste."

Student and Moslem organizations are trying to influence the three cabinet formateurs in their selection of new government personnel, so far without visible effect. None of the three leaders is close to Moslem political organizations, a fact that already seems to have aroused some Moslem dissatisfaction. There are as yet, however, no indications of serious dissension among the non-Communist groups. Nevertheless, basic divisive tendencies are strong in Indonesia and, in time, are bound to appear.

Army leaders continue to treat President Sukarno with circumspection. They emphasize that he is chief of state and that their actions are in accord with his desires.

Sukarno returned to Djakarta from his Bogor palace on 21 March and has met with the cabinet presidium and army leaders several times. So far he is said to have disapproved of the formation of a new cabinet, but indications are that the army will proceed anyway.

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Some Chinese Communist diplomatic and consular personnel, presumably reacting to repeated and violent anti-Chinese demonstrations, are leaving Indonesia. The Burmese Embassy is said to have issued 14 transit visas to Chinese Embassy applicants.

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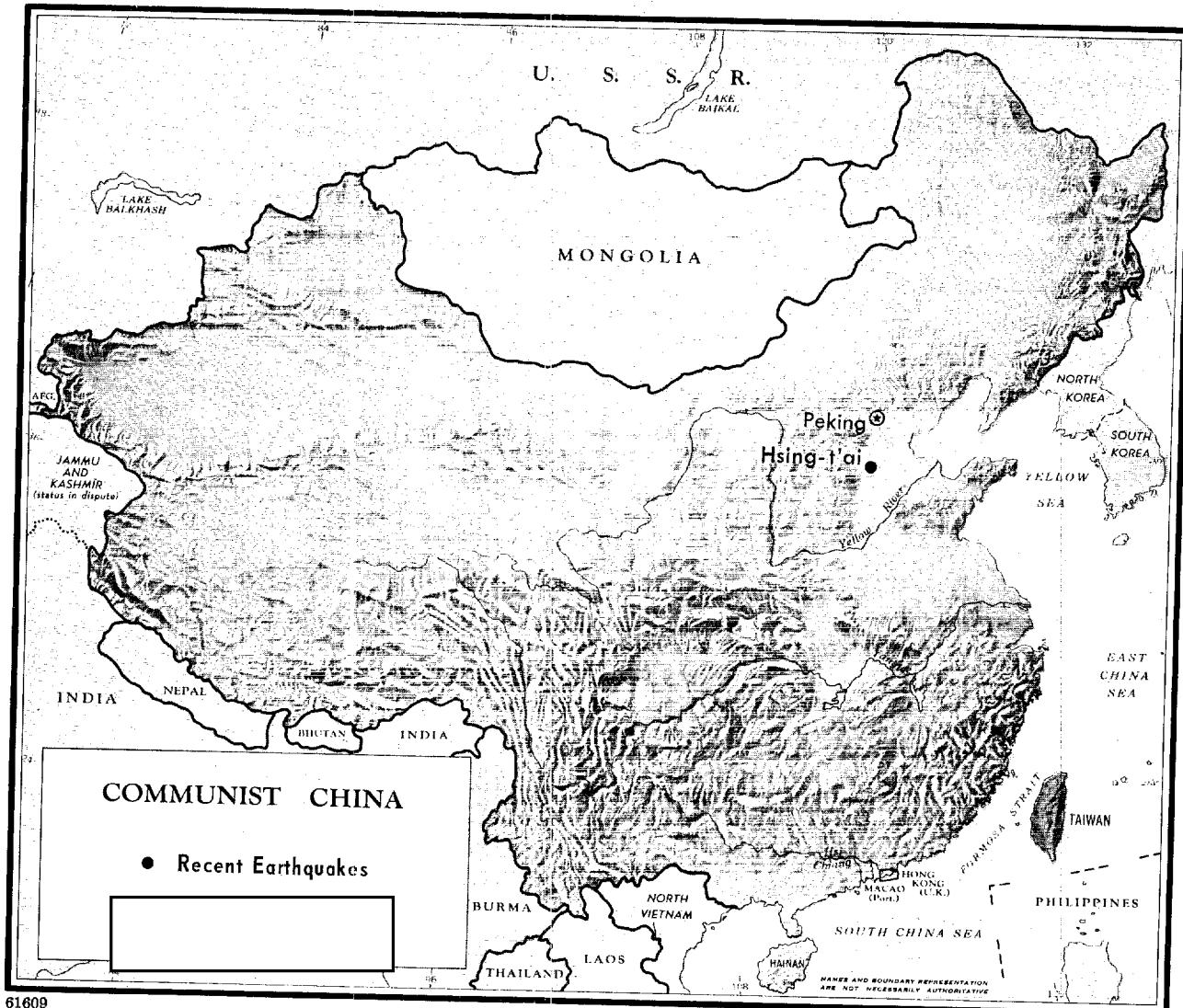
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Communist China: Earthquakes that struck northern China on 8, 20, and 22 March may have caused considerable damage and loss of life.

[redacted] casualties resulting from the 8 March tremor may have reached as high as 10,000. [redacted]

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[redacted] the injured were being brought to Peking hospitals from the earthquake area by all available means of transport.]

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The US Coast and Geodetic Survey estimates that the tremors on 8 and 20 March measured six on the Richter scale of nine. The 22 March earthquake had a magnitude of about seven. Western correspondents report that all three were felt in Peking, about 200 miles north of the epicenter which was in a densely populated and mainly agricultural area.

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Finland: The unprecedented gains by the Social Democrats in Finland's national elections on 20-21 March mark the return of this Western-oriented and traditionally anti-Communist party to a position of decisive influence.

The Social Democrats, whose 56 seats make them the largest single party in the 200-member parliament, profited from widespread dissatisfaction with the pro-farmer economic policies of a succession of coalition cabinets dominated by President Kekkonen's Center (Agrarian) Party. The magnitude of their victory, however, also suggests that many voters supported them to demonstrate confidence in a party which is in many ways a rallying point for forces that resent Soviet interference in Finnish domestic affairs.

Finnish practice requires that the Social Democrats, as the victors, be given the first try at forming the new government. A logical result would seem to be a resumption of cabinet cooperation between the Center and the Social Democrats which was the basis for almost every Finnish government in the postwar years up to 1958.

The negotiations may be long and difficult, however, in view of fundamental differences over economic policy between the two parties--one representing the interests of farmers and the other of workers and city dwellers--and the strained relations between their leaders.

Prior to the election, some prominent Social Democrats caused a flurry of speculation by hinting that they might be willing to cooperate with the Communists in a postelection cabinet. While this possibility cannot be entirely dismissed, such a move would be almost certain to cause a deep rift within the Social Democratic Party itself in view of the traditional hostility between the two parties.

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Colombia: The government's National Transformation Front (FTN) appears to have won a majority in congress in last Sunday's election, but not the two thirds needed for most important legislation.

Extrapolation from about 60 percent of the vote gives the FTN control of about 100 seats in the 190-seat Chamber of Deputies. Demagogic ex-dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's National Popular Alliance (ANP) made important gains, from 26 seats to 40, but the other opposition groups, the conservative Lauro-Alzatistas and the leftist Liberal Revolutionary Movement, lost 18 of the 63 seats they held in the 1964 chamber. [The future composition of the Senate cannot be predicted from available returns.] In the 106-seat Senate the FTN appears to have a majority of 20 seats.

These results indicate that Carlos Lleras Restrepo, the FTN's candidate in the 1 May presidential elections, should have little difficulty in overcoming whatever candidate the opposition selects to run against him. However, the lack of a two-thirds majority in congress and the expected vociferous opposition of the ANP representatives [will probably] force the new president to resort to rule by decree, as President Valencia has been doing since May 1965.

In coming months, should the government be unable to rule effectively, the military may once again consider the desirability of intervention to end the political and economic stagnation that is likely to result.

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